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Samuel Johnson.

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JOURNEYS
to the Homes of
ENGLISH
AUTHORS

Samuel Johnson

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Of this edition there were printed and specially illuminated by hand but Nine Hundred and Forty copies, and this book is Number

221X62

SAMUEL JOHNSON

LETTER TO CHESTERFIELD.

* * * Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms and was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, & have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am a solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, should less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM JOHNSON.



HE critics, I believe, have made a distinction between large men and great men. **SAMUEL JOHNSON**

Samuel Johnson was both.

He was massive in intellect, colossal in culture, prodigious in memory, weighed nigh three hundred pounds, and had prejudices to match. He was possessed of a giant's strength, and occasionally used it like a giant—for instance, when he felled an offensive bookseller with a folio.

Johnson was most unfortunate in his biographer. In picturing the great writer, Boswell writes more entertainingly than Johnson ever did, and thereby outtops his subject. And when in reply to the intimation that Boswell was going to write his life, Johnson answered, "If I really thought he was, I would take his," he spoke a jest in earnest.

Walking along Market Street in the city of St. Louis, with a friend, not long ago, my comrade suddenly stopped and excitedly pointed out a man across the way—"Look quick—there he goes!" exclaimed my friend, "that man with the derby and duster—see? That's the husband of Mrs. Lease of Kansas!" And all

SAMUEL JOHNSON I could say was, "God help him!" ¶ Not but that Mrs. Lease is a most excellent and amiable lady; but the idea of a man, made in the image of his Maker, being reduced to the social state of a drone bee, is most depressing.

Among that worthy class of people referred to somewhat ironically as "the reading public," Boswell is read, but Johnson never. And so sternly true is the fact, that many critics, set on a hair-trigger, aver that were it not for Boswell no one would now know that a writer by the name of Johnson ever lived. Yet the fact is, Boswell ruined the literary reputation of Johnson by intimating that Johnson wrote Johnsonese; but that is a mistake.

Johnson never wrote Johnsonese. The piling up of reasons, the cumulation of argument—setting off epigram against epigram—that mark Johnson's literary style are its distinguishing features. He is profound, but always lucid. And lucidity is just what modern Johnsonese lacks. The word was coined by a man who had neither the patience to read Johnson nor the ability to comprehend him. Only sophomores, and private secretaries who write speeches for able Congressmen, write Johnsonese.

Quibblers possibly may arise and present Johnson's definition of network—"anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances with interstices between the intersections," but with the quibbler we have no time to dally. Some people insist on having their

literature illustrated, just as others refuse to attend lectures that are not reinforced by a stereopticon. **SAMUEL JOHNSON**

Johnson had a style that is stately, dignified, splendid. It moves from point to point with absolute precision, and in it there is seldom anything ambiguous, muddy, confused or uncertain. Get down a volume of "Lives of the Poets," and prove my point for yourself, by opening at any page. It was Boswell who set his own light, chatty and amusing gossip over against the wise, stately diction of Johnson, and allowed Goldsmith to say, "Dear Doctor, if you were to write a story about little fishes, you would make them talk like whales," and the mud ball has stuck. The average man is much more willing to take the wily Boswell's word for it, than to read Johnson for himself.

The balanced power of Johnson's English cannot fail to delight the student of letters who cares to interest himself in the matter of sentence-building. Johnson handles a thought with such ease! He makes you think of the circus "strong man" who tosses the cannon ball, marked "weight 250 lbs." What if the balls are sometimes only wood painted black! Have we not been entertained? Read this specimen paragraph:

"Criticism is a study by which men grow important and formidable at very small expense. The power of invention has been conferred by nature upon few, and the labor of learning those sciences which may by continuous effort be obtained is too great to be willingly endured; but every man can exert such judgment as he

SAMUEL JOHNSON has upon the works of others; and he whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of 'critic'."

But the greatest literary light of his day has been thrown into the shadow by a man whom no one suspected of being able to write entertainingly. In the world of letters the great Cham exists only as a lesser luminary; just as the once noted novelist, George Henry Lewes, is now known only as the husband of George Eliot.

And yet no one is so rash as to say that the name of Boswell would now be known were it not for Johnson. And conversely (or otherwise) if it were the proper place, I could show that were it not for George Henry Lewes we should never have had "Adam Bede," or "The Mill on the Floss."

Boswell wrote the best "Life" ever written. Nothing like it was ever written before; nothing to equal it has been written since. It has had hundreds of imitators, but no competitors. Matthew Arnold said that no man ever had so good a subject, but Arnold for the moment seemed to forget that Hawkins, a professional literary man, published his "Life of Johnson" long before Boswell's was sent to the printer—and who reads Hawkins?

Surely Boswell had a great subject, and he rises to the level of his theme and makes the most of it. At times I have wondered if Boswell were not really a genius so great and profound that he was willing to play the

fool, as Edgar in "Lear" plays the maniac, and allow himself to be snubbed (in print) in order to make his telling point! Millionaires can well afford to wear ragged coats. Second-rate man Boswell may have been, as he himself so oft admits, yet as a biographer he stands first in the front rank. But suppose his extreme ignorance was only the domino disguising a cleverness so subtle that it was not discovered until after his death! And what if he smiles now, as from out of Elysium he looks and beholds how, as a writer, he has eclipsed old Ursa Major, and thus clipped the claws that were ready for any chance Scot who might pass that way!

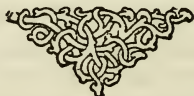
Mr. John Hay has suggested that possibly the insight, piquancy and calm wisdom of Omar Khayyam are two-thirds essence of FitzGerald. If so, the joke is on Omar, not on FitzGerald.

A dozen of Johnson's contemporaries wrote about him, and all make him out a profound scholar, a deep philosopher, a facile writer. Boswell by his innocent quoting and recounting makes his conversation outstrip all of his other accomplishments. He reveals the man by the most skillful indirection, and by leaving his guard down, often allows the reader to score a point. And of all devices of writing folk, none is finer than to please the reader by allowing him to pat himself on the back.

If a writer is too clever he repels. Shakespeare avoids the difficulty, and proves himself the master by keeping

SAMUEL out of sight; Renan wins by a great show of modesty
JOHNSON and deferential fairness; Boswell assumes an artlessness and ignorance that were really not parts of his nature. Every man who reads Boswell considers himself the superior of Boswell, and therefore is perfectly at home. It is not pleasant to be in the society of those who are much your superiors. Any man who sits in the company of Samuel Pepys for a half hour feels a sort of half-patronizing pity for him, and therefore is happy, for to patronize is bliss.

If Boswell has reinforced fact with fiction, and given us art for truth, then his character of Samuel Johnson is the most vividly conceived and deeply etched in all the realm of books. But if he gives merely the simple facts, then Boswell is no less a genius, for he has omitted the irrelevant & inconsequential, and by playing off the excellent against the absurd, he has placed his subject among the few great wits who have ever lived—a man who wrote remarkably well, but talked infinitely better.





MONTAIGNE advises young men **SAMUEL JOHNSON** that if they will fall in love, why, to fall in love with women older than themselves. His argument is that a young and pretty woman makes such a demand on a man's time and attention that she is sure, eventually, to wear love to the warp. So the wise old Gascon

suggests that it is the part of wisdom to give your affection to one who is both plain and elderly—one who is not suffering from a surfeit of love, and one whose head has not been turned by flattery. "Young women," says the philosopher, "demand attention as their right and often flout the giver; whereas old women are very grateful."

Whether Samuel Johnson, of Lichfield, ever read Montaigne or not is a question; but this we know, that when he was twenty-six he married the Widow Porter, aged forty-nine.

Assuming that Johnson had read Montaigne and was mindful of his advice, there were other excellent reasons why he did not link his fortunes with those of a young and pretty woman.

Johnson in his youth, as well as throughout life, was a Grind of the pure type. The Grind is a fixture, a few being found at every University, even unto this day. The present writer, once in a book of fiction, founded on fact, took occasion to refer to the genus Grind,

SAMUEL with Samuel Johnson in mind, as follows : He is poor
JOHNSON in purse, but great in frontal development.

He goes to school because he wishes to (no one ever "sent" a Grind to college). He has a sallow skin, a watery eye, a shambling gait, but he has the facts. His clothes are outgrown, his coat shiny, his linen a dull ecru, his hands clammy. He reads a book as he walks, and when he bumps into you, he always exculpates himself in Attic Greek.

This absent-mindedness and habit of reading on the street affords the Sport (another college type) great opportunity for the playing of pranks. It is very funny to walk along in front of a Grind who is reading as he walks, and then suddenly stop and stoop, and let the Grind fall over you ; for the innocent Grind, thinking he has been at fault, is ever profuse in apologies.

Many years ago there was a Grind. A party of Sports saw him approaching, deeply immersed in his book. "Look you," quoth the chief of the Sports—"look you and observe him fall over me."

And they looked.

Onward blindly trudged the Grind, reading as he came. The Sport stepped ahead of him, stooped, and——one big foot of the Grind shot out and kicked him into the gutter. Then the Grind continued his walk and his reading without saying a word.

This incident is here recorded for the betterment of the Young, to show them that things are not always what they seem. ¶ Samuel Johnson, I have said, was

a Grind of the pure type. He was so near-sighted that he fell over chairs in drawing rooms, and so awkward that his long arms occasionally brushed the bric-a-brac from mantels. No lady's train was safe if he was in the room. At gatherings of young people, if Johnson appeared, his presence was at once the signal for mirth, of which he was, of course, the unconscious object.

Johnson's face was scarred by the King's Evil, which even the touch of Queen Anne had failed to cure. While a youth he talked aloud to himself—a privilege that should be granted only to those advanced in years. He would grunt out prayers and expletives at uncertain times, keep up a clucking sound with his tongue, sway his big body from side to side, and drum a tattoo upon his knee. Now and again would come a suppressed whistle, and then a low humming sound, backed up by a vacant non compos mentis smile.

Another odd whim of Johnson's was, that he would never pass a lamp post without touching it, and would go back miles upon his way to repair an omission. Surely great wit to madness is near allied.

This most strange young man was a boarder in the home of Mrs. Porter, when her husband was alive, and the husband and boarder had been fast friends—drawn together by a bookish bias.

Very naturally when the husband passed away, the boarder sought to console the bereaved landlady, and the result was as usual. And when long years after,

SAMUEL JOHNSON would solemnly explain that it was a pure love-match on both sides, the statement never failed to excite much needless and ill-suppressed merriment on the part of the listeners. In mimicking the endearments of Johnson and his "pretty creature"—so the admiring husband called her—Garrick many years later added to his artistic reputation.

Unlike most literary men Johnson was domestic, and his marriage was one of the most happy events of his career. But to show that the philosophy of Montaigne is not infallible, and that all signs fail in dry weather, it may be stated that the bride proved by her conduct on her wedding day that she had some relish of the saltiness of time in her cosmos, despite her fifty summers and as many hard winters.

Said Johnson to Boswell, referring to the horseback ride home after the wedding ceremony: "Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; & I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did I observed her to be in tears."



HORTLY after his marriage, Johnson opened a private school for boys. To operate a private school successfully implies a certain amount of skill in the management of parents; but Johnson's uncouth manners and needlessly blunt speech were appalling to those who had children who might possibly

be given to imitation.

Only three pupils were secured, and but one of these received any benefit from the tutor; and this benefit came according to the scholar, from the master's supplying an excellent object for ridicule.

This pupil's name was David Garrick.

The meeting with David Garrick was a pivotal point in the life of Johnson. Johnson's mental and spiritual existence flowed on, separate and apart, from that of his wife. There was no meeting of the waters. His affection for her was most tender and constant, but in quality it seemed to differ but slightly from the sentiment he entertained toward "Hodge," his cat.

Hodge was fed on oysters that his owner could ill afford; and after Johnson had spent the little fortune that belonged to his wife, the lady was regaled on the best and choicest that his income, or credit, could secure. But if one of those lightning flashes of wit ever escaped him in her direction, we do not know it. Garrick evidently was the first flint that tried his steel.

SAMUEL JOHNSON The distinctions of teacher and scholar were soon lost between these two, and the lessons took the turn of a fusillade of wit. They made comments on the authors they read, and comments on the people they met, and criticised each other with encaustic remarks that tested friendship to its extremest limit. And this continual skirmish that would have made sworn foes of common men in a day, revealed to each that the other had the element of unexpectedness in his nature and was worth loving.

Humor and melancholy go hand in hand; both are born of an extreme sensitiveness, and the man who smiles at the trivial misfits of life realizes also that all men who tread the earth are living under a sentence of death, and that Fate has merely allowed them an indefinite, but limited, reprieve.

At the outset of Johnson's career, one cannot but see that the companionship and nimble wit of Garrick saved his ponderous and melancholy mind from going into bankruptcy.

And now we find them, one twenty-eight, big, near-sighted, theoretical, blundering; and the other twenty-one, slight, active, graceful, practical. They were alike in this: they both loved books and were possessed of the eager, earnest, receptive mind. To possess the hospitable mind! For what greater blessing can one pray!

And then they were alike in other respects—they were desperately poor; neither had an income; neither had

a profession; both were ambitious. Johnson had written a tragedy—"Irene"—and he had read it to Garrick several times, and Garrick said it was good and should make a hit. But Garrick did n't know much about tragedies—law was his bent—he had read law for two years, off and on. They would go to London and seize fortune by the scalp-lock. In London good lawyers were needed, and London was the only place for a playwright.

SAMUEL
JOHNSON

They scraped together their pennies, borrowed a few more, got a single letter of introduction between them to some person of unknown influence & started away, with the lachrymose blessings of the elderly bride, & of Davy's mother.

They must have been a queer sight when the stage let them down at the Strand—dusty, dirty, tired and scared by the babel of sounds & sights! And no doubt Johnson's enormous size saved them from sundry insults and divers taunts that otherwise might have come their way.

Those first few weeks in London were given to staring into shop windows and wandering, open-mouthed, up and down. No one wanted the tragedy—the managers all sniffed at it. Little then did Davy dream, as they made their way from the office of one theatre manager to that of another, that he himself would some day own a theatre and give the discarded play its first setting. And little did he think that he would yet be the foremost actor of his time, and his awkward mate the

SAMUEL JOHNSON literary dictator of London. Oh! this game of life is a great play! The blissful uncertainty of it all! The ambitions, plans, strivings, heartaches, mad desires and vain reaching out of empty arms! The tears, the bitter disappointments, the sleepless nights, the echoes of prayers unheard, and the hollow hopelessness of love turned to hate!

And then mayhap we do as Emerson did—go out into the woods, and all the trees say, “Why so hot, my little man?”

Garrick, disappointed and undone at the thought of defeat in his chosen profession, turned to commercial life, and then to the theatre. At his first stage appearance he trembled with diffidence and all but fled in fright. He persevered, for he could do nothing else. He arose step by step, and honors, wealth and fame were his. Love came to him: he wedded the woman of his choice. And after his death she survived for forty-three years. She lived one hundred years, lacking two. Garrick was born in 1716; and his wife died in 1822, which seems to bring the times of Johnson pretty close home to us. Throughout her long life, she lived in the memory of the love that had been hers; cherishing and protecting, idolizing, as did Mary Shelley, the one name and that alone.

Johnson and Garrick thoroughly respected and admired each other, yet they often quarreled—they quarreled to the last. But when Davy had lain him down in his last sleep, aged sixty-three, it was Johnson, aged

seventy, who wrote his epitaph, introducing into it the **SAMUEL**
deathless sentence * * * "by that stroke of **JOHNSON**
death which has eclipsed the gaiety of
nations, and impoverished the
public stock of harm-
less pleasure."



SAMUEL
JOHNSON



THREE months in London and Johnson succeeded in getting a place on the editorial staff of "The Gentleman's Magazine." Prosperity smiled, not exactly a broad grin; but the expression was something better than a stony, forbidding stare.

He made haste to go back to Lichfield after his "Letty," which name, by the way is an improvement on Betty, Betsy or Tetsy—being baby-talk for Elizabeth.

They took modest lodgings in a third floor back, off Fleet Street, and Johnson began that life of struggle against debt, ridicule and unkind condition that was to continue for forty-seven years; never out of debt, never free from attacks of enemies; a life of wordy warfare and inky broadsides against cant, affectation and untruth—with the weapons of his dialectics always kept well burnished by constant use; hated & loved; jeered and praised; feared and idolized.

Coming out of his burrow one dark night, he encountered an old beggar-woman who importuned him for alms. He was brushing past her, when one of her exclamations caught his ear. "Sir," said the woman, "I am an old struggler!"

"Madam," replied Johnson, "so am I!" And he gave her his last sixpence.

But life in London was cheap in those days—it is now

if you know how to do it, or else have to. Johnson **SAMUEL**
used to maintain that for thirty pounds a year one could **JOHNSON**
live like a gentleman, and as proof would quote an
imaginary acquaintance who argued that ten pounds a
year for clothes would keep a man in good appearance;
a garret could be hired for eighteen pence a week, and
if anyone asked your address you could reply, "I am
to be found in such a place." Three pence laid out at a
coffee-house would enable one to pass some hours a
day in good company; dinner might be had for six-
pence and supper you could do without. On clean-shirt
day you could go abroad and call on your lady friends.
Among Johnson's first literary tasks in London was
the work of reporting the debates in Parliament. In
order that the best possible results might be obtained,
he resorted to the rather unique, but not entirely orig-
inal, method of not attending Parliament at all. Two or
three young men would be sent to listen to the debates;
they would make notes giving the general drift of the
argument, and Johnson would write out the speech.
His style was exactly suited to this kind of work, being
eminently rhetorical. And as at the time no public rec-
ord of proceedings was kept and Parliament did not
allow the press the liberty it now possesses—all being
as it were clouded in mysterious awe—these re-
ports of debates were eagerly sought after. To evade
the law, a fictitious name was given the speaker, or
his initials used in such a way that the individual
could be easily recognized by the reading public.

SAMUEL JOHNSON Some of Johnson's best work was done at this time, and in several instances the speaker, not slow to appreciate a good thing, allowed the matter to be reissued as his own. Long years after, a certain man was once praising the speeches of Lord Chesterfield and was led on to make explanations. He did so, naming two speeches, one of which he zealously declared had the style of Cicero; the other that of Demosthenes. Johnson becalmed the speaker by agreeing with him as to the excellence of the speeches, and then adding, "I wrote them both."

The gruffness of Ursa Major should never be likened to that of the Sage of Chelsea. Carlyle vented his spleen on the nearest object, as irate gentlemen sometimes kick at the cat; but Johnson merely sparred for points. When Miss Monckton undertook to refute his statements as to the shallowness of Sterne by declaring that "Tristram Shandy" affected her to tears, Johnson rolled himself into contortions, made an exasperating grimace and replied, "Why, dearest, that is because you are a dunce!" Afterward, when reproached for the remark, he replied, "Madam, if I had thought so, I surely would not have said it."

Once, at the house of Garrick, to the terror of everyone, Burke contradicted Johnson flatly, but Johnson's good sense revealed itself by his making no show of resentment. Burke's experience was, it must be said, exceptional. An equally exciting, but harmless occasion, was the only time that the author of "Rasselas"

met the man who wrote the "Wealth of Nations." SAMUEL JOHNSON called Adam Smith a liar, and Smith promptly handed back an epithet not in the Dictionary. Nevertheless, old Ursa spoke in an affectionate praise of "Adam," as he called him thereafter, thus recognizing the right of the other man to be frank if he cared to be. Johnson wanted no privilege that he was not willing to grant to others,—except perhaps that of dictator of opinions.

When Blair asked Johnson if he thought any modern man could have written "Ossian," Johnson replied, "Yes, sir—many men, many women, and many children." And if Blair took umbrage at the remark, so much the worse for Blair.

We have recently heard of the Boston lady who died and went to Heaven, and on being questioned by an archangel as to how she liked it, replied languidly, "Very, very beautiful it all is!" And then sighed and added, "But it is not Boston!" This story seems to illustrate that all tales have their prototype, for Boswell tells of taking Dr. Johnson out to Greenwich Park, and saying, "Now, now, is n't this fine!" But Johnson would not enthuse; he only grunted, "All very fine—but it 's not Fleet Street."

On another occasion when a Scotchman was dilating on the noble prospects to be enjoyed among the hills of Scotland, Johnson called a halt by saying, "Sir, let me tell you that the noblest prospect a Scotchman ever sees is the highroad that leads him to England."

SAMUEL JOHNSON ¶ This seems to evince a strong prejudice toward Scotland, and several Scots, with their usual plentiful lack of wit have so solemnly written it down. But the more sensible way is to conclude that the situation simply afforded opportunity for a little harmless banter. ¶ Another equally indisputable proof of prejudice is shown when Boswell tells Johnson of the wonderful preaching of a Quaker woman. Johnson listened in grim, cold silence and then exclaimed, "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

One of the leading encyclopedias, I see, says, "Dr. Johnson was one of the greatest conversationalists of all time." The writer evidently does not distinguish between talk, conversation and harangue. Johnson could talk and he often harangued; but he was not a conversationalist. Neither could he address a public assembly, and I do not find that he ever attempted it. Good talkers are seldom orators. One reads with amusement tinged with pity, of Carlyle's sleepless nights and cold, terror-fraught anticipations of his Lord Rector's speech. In deliberative gatherings a very small man could apply the snuffers to the great Dictator of Letters.

"Sir," said Dr. Johnson to a talkative politician, at a dinner party, "I perceive you are a vile Whig," and then he proceeded to demolish him. Yet Johnson himself was a Whig, although he never knew it; just as he

was a liberal in religion, and yet was boastful of being a stanch Churchman. **SAMUEL JOHNSON**

Johnson's irritability never vented itself against the helpless. His charity knew no limit—not even the bottom of his purse. When he had no money to give, he borrowed it. And when his pension was three hundred pounds a year, the Thrales could not figure out that he spent more than seventy or eighty on himself. The rest went to his dependents. In his latter days his home was a regular museum of waifs and strays. There was Miss Williams, the ancient aristocratic spinster who came to London to have an operation performed on one of her eyes. She came to Johnson's home and remained ten years, because she had been a friend of his wife. This claim was enough and she slid into the head place in Johnson's household. Her peevishness used to drive the old man, at times, into the street; but that tongue of his, with its crushing retorts, was ever silent and tender towards her. The poor creature became blind, and used to shock the finicky Boswell by testing the fulness of the teacups with her finger.

Then there was a Mrs. Desmoulins and her daughter who drifted down from Lichfield and came to Johnson, because forty years before he, too, had lived in Lichfield. He gave them house-room, treated them as guests, and each week left a half-guinea on the mantel of their room.

Then there was the broken down Levett, and Francis

SAMUEL Barber, who, coming as a servant, remained as one
JOHNSON of the family, because he was too old to work. A
Miss Carmichael, in green spectacles and bombazine,
carrying a cane, completed what the Doctor called his
“seraglio.” Writing to Mrs. Thrale in playful mood, tell-
ing of his household troubles, he says, “Williams hates
everybody; Levett hates Desmoulins, & does not love
Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll loves
none of them.” And he, the great, gruff and
mighty Ursa Major, listened to all their
woes, caring for them in sickness, wip-
ing the death-dew from their fore-
heads, wearing crape upon
his sleeve for them
when dead.





HIS man tasted all the fame that **SAMUEL JOHNSON**

is one man's due; he had all the money he needed, or knew how to use; the coveted LL. D. came from his Alma Mater; and the patronage from Lord Chesterfield, for which he craved, only that he might fling it back. He was the friend and confidant of the great

and proud, deferred to by the King and sought out by those who prized the far-reaching mind and subtle imagination—the things that link us with the Infinite. The fear of hell and dread of death that haunted him in youth and middle age, finally gave way to faith and trust. When partial paralysis came to him at midnight, his sanity did not fail him, and knowing the worst, he yet hesitated to disturb the other members of the household, but went to sleep, philosophizing on the phenomena of the case—alert for more knowledge, as was his wont. Morning came and being speechless, he wrote on his ever ready pad of paper and handing the sheet to his servant, watched with amused glances the perplexity and terror of the man. He next wrote to his friend, Mrs. Thrale, that letter, a classic of wit and resignation, wherein he explains his condition and excuses himself for not calling upon her and explaining the matter by word of mouth.

Such willingness to accept the inevitable is curative. He grew better and recovered his speech. But old age

SAMUEL JOHNSON is a disease that has no cure save death. Johnson accepted the issue as a brave man should—thankful for the gift of conscious life that had been his. When the last hour was nigh he sent loving messages to his nearest friends, repeating their names over one by one. His last recorded words were directed to a young woman who called upon him, “God bless you, my dear.”

And so he passed painlessly and quietly into the sleep that knows no waking; pleased at last to know that his dust would rest in Westminster Abbey.

Thus ended, as the day dies out of the western sky, this life, seemingly so full of tempest and contradiction. The autumn of his life was full of enjoyment, and no day passed but that someone, weak, weary and worn, arose and called him blessed. Most of his wild imprecations and blustering contradictions were reserved for those who fattened on such things, and who came to be tossed and gored. In his spirit Socrates and Falstaff joined hands. In his life there was a deal of gladness—far, far more than of misery and unrest; which fact I believe is true of every life.

The Universe seems planned for good.

A world made up of such men as Samuel Johnson would be a wild chaos of tasks undone. But since Nature has never sent but one such man, and more than a century has passed since his death and we know not yet with whom to compare him, we need have no fears. The world is held in place through the opposition of forces: and the body of every healthy man is the

battle ground of animal organisms that match strength against strength. So, too, a healthy society always has these active and sturdy organisms, which set in play other forces that hold in check their seeming excess. That the Divine Energy should incarnate itself and find expression in the form of a man, and that this man should inspire others to think and write, to do and dare, is a subject the contemplation of which should make us stand uncovered. The companionship of Johnson inspired Reynolds to better painting, Garrick to stronger acting, Burke to more profound thinking—and hundreds of others, too, quenched their thirst at the rock which he smote whenever he discoursed or wrote. Sympathy is the first essential to insight. So with sympathy, I pray, behold this blundering giant, and you will see that the basis of his character was a great Sincerity. He was honest—doggedly honest—and saw with flashing vision the thing that was; and thither he followed, crowding, pushing, knocking down whatsoever opinion or prejudice was in the way. And so he ever struggled forward. But hate him not, for he is thy brother—yea! he is brother to all who strive and reach forward toward the Ideal. Shining through dust and disorder, now victorious, now eclipsed in deepest gloom, in him is the light of genius; and this is never base, but at the worst is admirable, lovable with pity. There was pride in his heart, but no vanity; and he should be loved for this if for no other reason: he had the courage to make an enemy. In his great heart were

SAMUEL
JOHNSON

SAMUEL wild burstings of affection, and a hunger for love that
JOHNSON only the grave required. There, too, were fierce
flashes of wrath, smothered in an hour by the
soft dew of pity. His faults & follies were
manifold, as he often lamented with
tears; but the soul of the man was
sublime in its qualities—world-
wide in its influence.



SO HERE ENDETH THE LITTLE JOURNEY TO THE HOME
OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, AS WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUB-
BARD: THE TITLE PAGE AND INITIALS BEING DE-
SIGNED BY SAMUEL WARNER, THE WHOLE DONE INTO
A PRINTED BOOK BY THE ROYCROFTERS, AT THEIR
SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW
YORK, IN DECEMBER OF THE YEAR MCM I *W W W W*



